



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

P.O. BOX 83720
BOISE, IDAHO 83720-0027

DR. MARILYN HOWARD
STATE SUPERINTENDENT
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

STATE GUIDANCE

To: National School Lunch Program Sponsors
From: Mary Jo Marshall, Child Nutrition Program Specialist
Date: February 5, 2005
Subject: Determining eligibility for military families in the Child Nutrition Programs
Policy Memo SP-05-13

This memo clarifies Food and Nutrition Service's (FNS) policy about income eligibility for those households that include deployed military personnel engaged in long-term military campaigns overseas.

Background

In October 1991 during the military campaign "Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm," FNS Child Nutrition Division (CND) issued guidance related to the treatment of military income. Subsequently, in February 2003, we issued two memoranda that addressed the issues related to the treatment of military income for the military campaign Operation Enduring Freedom/Noble Eagle. Prompted by the deployment of US military forces in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, we are issuing this memorandum to establish policy as it applies to this and future military deployments in recognition that:

- military deployments are initiated with little or no advance warning, and
- each deployment receives a unique designation to distinguish it from any other deployment or campaign.

Current Policy

Under current policy,¹ household members who are *temporarily absent* from their household are considered household members, and their income is included with other household income when officials make eligibility determinations. However, when calculating household size, officials do not count members who are away for an *extended period of time*. Furthermore, when calculating a household's total income, officials only include that portion of the absent individual's earnings that he or she makes available to the household.

Office Location
650 West State Street

Telephone
208-332-6800

Speech/Hearing Impaired
1-800-377-3529

FAX
208-334-2228

¹ See pages 32-33 of the Eligibility Guidance for School Meals Manual issued August 2001

Policy for Deployed Service Members

FNS allows an exception to current eligibility policy. Officials use this exception when they determine the income and size of households containing deployed military personnel.² The exception will remain in effect until legislation or additional policy guidance supersedes it. Under this policy, officials should include deployed service members when calculating household size, and should consider those service persons to be *temporarily absent*. However, when officials calculate the household's income, they should only include that portion of the deployed service member's earnings that he or she makes available to the remaining members of the household.

FNS' new policy makes special accommodations for

- free and reduced price meal eligibility determinations,
- tier I day care home determinations, and
- meal benefits for children temporarily residing with their day care home provider.

School Nutrition Programs

Schools are to instruct families completing their meal benefit forms to include the names and that portion of income of deployed service members made available to the household. The determining official would count the service member as part of the household in establishing a child's eligibility for free and reduced price meals.

Child and Adult Care Food Program

An institution would instruct families to include the names and income of deployed service members on their meal benefit forms. The determining official would count the service member as part of the household in establishing a day care home provider's eligibility for tier I reimbursement rates.

Deployment of a parent or guardian may also affect the eligibility of a child who temporarily resides with a day care home provider to receive meals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Although the child may live with the provider while the service member is deployed, the child would not be considered a "provider's own" child. In this special situation, the child would continue to participate in the meal service as a nonresidential participant. To claim reimbursement for program meals, the day care home provider must have power of attorney, custody, or an agreement established by the military to provide residential care to the child.

If you have any questions regarding this requirement please contact our office at 208-332-6820.

² See Policy Memo SP-03-04, Policy Memo SP-03-03, and Policy Memo SP-02-08